

# What is better than a peer-review process?

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The current impact factor of 2.12 for the *Polish Archives of Internal Medicine* (*Pol Arch Med Wewn*), which was released in the Journal Citation Reports in June 2015, has strengthened the journal's standing. Over the last year, we were pleased to observe a substantial increase in unsolicited submissions to the journal. We continue to be a leader in a timely publication of research related to internal medicine among Polish medical journals. Our journal guarantees a fast peer review process within approximately 1 month since submission. Given a significant impact that the quality of the reviews has on the position of a journal, we decided to comment on this issue.

The selection of papers for publication in a medical journal is the responsibility of editors who consider not only the novelty and accuracy of the work, but also the potential impact of the results on clinical practice. In the *Pol Arch Med Wewn*, we rigorously rely on a properly conducted peer-review when accepting papers for publication. We are aware that the success of our journal lies in the hands of our reviewers. A good manuscript review requires time, effort, and often some background research. The opportunity to review manuscripts should be regarded as a contribution to academic knowledge. Despite this, the reviews we receive vary from exhaustive and detailed to those written in haste and with a minimum effort.

The value of a review is not limited to advice on the final decision on the manuscript, but also contains comments on how to improve the manuscript before the final publication. Therefore, we hope that our reviewers will be as reliable in their peer-review task as in preparing their own manuscripts. We have selected those reviewers whose critiques are consistently excellent and presented their names and short biographical notes in [APPENDIX 1](#). The manuscripts submitted by those scientists to our journal will always receive our particular attention and priority in the peer-review process. To acknowledge the efforts of our other top reviewers in 2015, we listed their names in [APPENDIX 2](#). Finally, we listed the names of

all our reviewers who evaluated our manuscripts in 2015 ([APPENDIX 3](#)).

We are fully aware that the peer-review process is imperfect, and we frequently encounter controversies that require editorial judgment. The most common one is when reviewers disagree in their assessment of the work and the recommendation for publication. It was shown previously in other journals that in nearly 40% of cases the opinions of the reviewers might be discordant.<sup>1</sup> In the *Pol Arch Med Wewn*, it is not that common but such situations always require a case-by-case assessment by editors, so as not to miss an important paper or publish flawed research. Our policy is to respect our reliable reviewers, and whenever there is a well-founded recommendation to reject the paper, we try not to override it.

There are divergent opinions as to whether the reviewers should be blinded to the origin of the paper. We believe that our objective reviewers have the right to know what the research track of the authors is. Moreover, it was shown that blinding had no significant influence on the review quality, reviewers' recommendations, or time taken to review the paper.<sup>2</sup> The editors of the *British Medical Journal* demonstrated this clearly in a trial of 527 consecutive manuscripts submitted to the journal and randomized to a blinded or unmasked review.<sup>2</sup>

The same authors studied also the quality of the submitted reviews in order to find out what makes a good reviewer. The only significant factor associated with a better review was the reviewer's experience in epidemiology and statistics.<sup>3</sup> Interestingly, younger reviewers performed better than the more experienced ones, and the members of the editorial board had lower ratings on their reviews. Such results are also in accordance with our experience in the *Pol Arch Med Wewn*, except the fact that we select our members of the Scientific Board based on previous experience with them as reviewers. Therefore, the quality of the reviews of our Scientific Board is exceptional. Interestingly, the authors also showed that there was an association between the time spent on the review and

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its quality up to 3 hours, but not beyond. Therefore, we think that it could be a good recommendation for our reviewers.<sup>3</sup>

Our challenge is to continue to work hard to even further improve the standing of the *Pol Arch Med Wewn*. Without the involvement of our authors, reviewers, readers, and supporters, this will not be possible. At the beginning of 2016, we wish you all success in your research and look forward to your continued contribution to the *Pol Arch Med Wewn* both as reviewers and as authors in the coming year.

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- 3 Black N, van Rooyen S, Godlee F, et al. What makes a good reviewer and a good review for a general medical journal? *JAMA*. 1998; 280: 231-233.

## Appendix 1

### Biographical sketches of top 5 reviewers in 2015

#### Artur Dziewierz, MD, PhD



Artur Dziewierz, MD, PhD, is a specialist in internal diseases and invasive cardiology. He works at the 2nd Department of Cardiology and Cardiovascular Interventions at the University Hospital in Kraków. He is an author of more than 100 scientific peer-reviewed papers, numerous conference proceedings, as well as book chapters on invasive cardiology and acute coronary syndromes. He was awarded by the Polish Society of Cardiology in 2003, by the Division of Medical Sciences of the Polish Academy of Sciences in 2009, and by the Royal Capital City of Kraków for achievements in science and technology in 2010. Since 2014, he has been a member of the National Scientific

Board of the *Polish Archives of Internal Medicine*, and since 2015—the Vice Editor-in-Chief of *Advances in Interventional Cardiology*.

#### Daniel P. Potaczek, MD, PhD



Having completed his studies at Jagiellonian University Medical College (1996–2002) and a postgraduate residency at the University Hospital (2002–2003), Daniel P. Potaczek entered a PhD program at the Department of Medicine at Jagiellonian University Medical College (2003–2007) in Kraków, Poland. He received his PhD degree for the work on the genetic variability of the high-affinity IgE receptor. Soon after, in 2007, he moved to the Atopy (Allergy) Research Center of the Juntendo University School of Medicine in Tokyo, Japan, where he worked until 2010. Between 2010 and 2012, he continued his work on the genetics and genomics of IgE receptors and its effects on serum IgE regulation at the Department of Pediatric Pneumology, Allergy and Neonatology at the Hannover Medical School in Hannover, Germany. His research in Hannover was also focused on the role of *ORMDL* genes in the development of childhood asthma. Subsequently, he moved to the John Paul II Hospital in Kraków, Poland, where between 2012 and 2013, he was involved in studies on the role of interleukin-6 pathway genetic polymorphisms in aortic stenosis and on hemostatic or cardiovascular monogenetic disorders. Since 2013, he has been an employee of the Institute of Laboratory Medicine, Philipp University of Marburg, Germany, where he works on the development of novel antisense approach-based therapeutics as well as on the role of respiratory viruses, epigenetic modifications, and other mechanisms contributing to the susceptibility to allergy and related disorders.



Professor Tomasz Stompór graduated from the Medical Academy in Kraków. He is a specialist in internal medicine, nephrology, hypertension, and clinical transplantology. In 1992–2009, he was an associate professor at the Department of Nephrology of Jagiellonian University Medical College in Kraków, and since 2009, he has been the chair of the Department of Nephrology, Hypertension, and Internal Diseases at the University of Warmia and Mazury in Olsztyn, Poland. He received the title of full professor in 2014. He is currently a vice-dean for science (2012–2016) at the Faculty of Medicine, University of Warmia and Mazury in Olsztyn.

He is an author or coauthor of more than 130 papers in peer-review journals, such as *Nephron*, *American Journal of Kidney Diseases*, *Nephrology Dialysis and Transplantation*, *Peritoneal Dialysis International*, *British Journal of Clinical Pharmacology*, *Clinical Nephrology*, *Polish Archives of Internal Medicine*, *Journal of Human Hypertension*, and *Clinical Chemistry and Laboratory Medicine*. He is also an author of more than 120 conference proceedings and almost 60 book chapters on internal diseases, nephrology, and hypertension.

He received two team awards from the Minister of National Education as well as an individual award from the Minister of Health for outstanding scientific achievements. He was appointed the Board Member of the Polish Society of Nephrology twice: in the years 2010–2013 and 2013–2016. He is a member of the National Scientific Board of the *Polish Archives of Internal Medicine*. He is also a member of the Polish Society of Nephrology, Polish Society of Transplantology, and the *European Dialysis and Transplant Association – European Renal Association*.

His main scientific interests include cardiac nephrology, pathological calcification in uremia, peritoneal dialysis, and renal complications of multiple myeloma.

He is married and has two children. His hobby is long-distance running and history. He plays violin and guitar, and sings in the doctors' blues-rock band "The Painkillers".



Professor Jolanta Małyszko received the title of full professor in 2002, and since 2013, she has been the chair of the 2nd Department on Nephrology, Medical University of Białystok, Białystok, Poland. She did her clinical training in the intensive care unit and Department of Nephrology, CHU Rouen, France; Department of Nephrology, Heinrich-Heine University, Düsseldorf, Germany (ERA-EDTA clinical scholarship); McKennon Hospital, Sioux Falls, South Dakota, United States (invasive cardiology); Kings' College of London, United Kingdom; and Sourasky Hospital, Israel. During the Japanese Ministry of Education scholarship at the Hamamatsu University School of Medicine, she defended her PhD thesis on the role of FK 506 in transplantation (1995). She established a PD program and Hypertension Outpatient Unit at the University of Białystok and served for many years as a nephrology consultant at the University Teaching Hospital. Her major interests are iron metabolism and anemia as well as cardiovascular complications in kidney diseases. In her research, she collaborates with cardiology and invasive cardiology departments as well as vascular and transplantation units affiliated with universities in Poland and abroad.

She is a specialist in internal medicine, nephrology, transplantation, hypertension, and diabetology as well as a European specialist in clinical hypertension. She was granted the title of a fellow of ASN (FASN) and ERA-EDTA (FERA). She is a member of the Executive Council of ERA-EDTA (3rd woman in the history of ERA-EDTA) and Polish Society of Nephrology.



She is an author and coauthor of over 400 original papers, over 100 review papers, and 30 book chapters, including chapters in French, and a chapter in the 4th *Oxford Textbook of Clinical Nephrology*. Her impact factor is 500 and h-index—29. Her papers were cited over 3000 times. Her hobby is travelling. In her journeys, she is accompanied by her husband, a nephrologist, and their 3 sons.

#### Jarosław Zalewski, MD, PhD



Jarosław Zalewski graduated from the Faculty of Medicine at the Jagiellonian University Medical College. He is a specialist in internal medicine and cardiology and currently is employed as a senior lecturer and interventional cardiologist in the Department of Coronary Heart Disease at Jagiellonian University Medical College. In 2006, he defended his PhD thesis on hypoxia and reoxygenation of human endothelial cells and the expression of their selected genes in vitro. In 2008–2009, he was on the Kolumb scholarship of the Foundation for Polish Science in the Department of Cardiology, Catholic University Leuven, Belgium. The title of his habilitation completed in 2014 was: “New pro-thrombotic mechanisms accompanying impaired epicardial and tissue reperfusion during acute myocardial infarction as well as in-stent thrombosis”. In his research, he studies the mechanisms of ischemia/reperfusion injury during acute myocardial infarction; looks for early, clinically useful indicators of this damage (based on angiography, magnetic resonance imaging, and laboratory findings); evaluates the efficacy of different pharmacoinvasive methods (antiplatelet and antithrombotic drugs, aspiration thrombectomy, postconditioning, and cyclosporine) applied before and during mechanical reperfusion to improve short- and long-term clinical outcomes and left ventricular function; and investigates innovative therapeutic

methods for mechanical complications of myocardial infarction.

## Appendix 2

### Top reviewers in 2015

No.	Name
Scientific Board members	
1	Artur Dziewierz, MD, PhD
2	Tomasz Stompór, Prof.
3	Jolanta Małyszko, Prof.
4	Krzysztof Strojek, Prof.
5	Józef Drzewoski, Prof.
nonmembers	
6	Daniel P. Potaczek, MD, PhD
7	Jarosław Zalewski, MD, PhD
8	Małgorzata M. Bała, MD, PhD
9	Aleksander Prejbisz, MD, PhD
10	Tomasz M. Rywik, MD, PhD
11	Grzegorz Kopeć, MD, PhD
12	Piotr Lipiec, MD, PhD
13	Tomasz Rakowski, MD, PhD
14	Agnieszka Kapłon-Cieślicka, MD, PhD
15	Karol A. Kamiński, MD, PhD

## Appendix 3

### List of all reviewers in 2015 (in an alphabetical order, based on Editorial Manager\*)

Aleksandra Araszkiewicz, MD, PhD  
 Erol Arslan, MD  
 Magdalena Celińska-Löwenhoff, MD, PhD  
 Krzysztof Celinski, MD, PhD  
 Artur Czekierdowski, MD, PhD  
 Hanna Bachórzewska-Gajewska, MD, PhD  
 Małgorzata M. Bała, MD, PhD  
 Nektarios Barabutis, MD, PhD  
 Rafał Baranowski, MD, PhD  
 Witold Bartnik, MD, PhD  
 Przemysław Bąbel, PhD  
 Tomasz Bednarczuk, MD, PhD  
 Grażyna Bochenek, MD, PhD  
 Tomasz Bochenek, MD, PhD  
 Anna Bodzenta-Lukaszyk, MD, PhD  
 Marlena Broncel, MD, PhD  
 Tomasz Brzozowski, MD, PhD  
 Andrzej Budaj, MD, PhD  
 Ksenia Bykowska, MD, PhD  
 Halina Cichoż-Lach, MD, PhD  
 Jerzy Chudek, MD, PhD  
 Katarzyna Cyganek, MD, PhD  
 Katarzyna Cypriak, MD, PhD  
 Stanisław Czekalski, MD, PhD  
 Anna Członkowska, MD, PhD

Urszula Demkow, MD, PhD  
 Mirosław Dłużniewski, MD, PhD  
 Józef Drzewoski, MD, PhD  
 Jan Duława, MD, PhD  
 Jarosław Dziadek, PhD  
 Artur Dziewierz, MD, PhD  
 Piotr Eder, MD, PhD  
 Iwona Flisiak, MD, PhD  
 Zbigniew Gaciong, MD, PhD  
 Andrzej Gackowski, MD, PhD  
 Grzegorz Gajos, MD, PhD  
 Stanisław Głuszek, MD, PhD  
 Piotr Głuszek, MD, PhD  
 Maciej Gnass, MD  
 Dominik Golicki, PhD  
 Tomasz Grodzicki, MD, PhD  
 Marcin Gruchała, MD, PhD  
 Alicja E. Grzegorzewska, MD, PhD  
 Janusz Gumprecht, MD, PhD  
 Paweł Gutaj, MD  
 Bartłomiej Guzik, MD, PhD  
 Maciej Haberka, MD, PhD  
 Robert G. Hart, MD, PhD  
 Grzegorz Helbig, MD, PhD  
 Andrzej R. Hellmann, MD, PhD  
 Michał Holecki, MD, PhD  
 Philip Hooper, MD, PhD  
 Alicja Hubalewska-Dydejczyk, MD, PhD  
 Andrzej Januszewicz, MD, PhD  
 Ewa Jassem, MD, PhD  
 Marek Jastrzębski, MD, PhD  
 Wiesław W. Jędrzejczak, MD, PhD  
 Achim Jörres, MD, PhD  
 Wojciech Jurczak, MD, PhD  
 Roman Junik, MD, PhD  
 Grzegorz Kamiński, MD, PhD  
 Karol A. Kamiński, MD, PhD  
 Agnieszka Kapłon-Cieślicka, MD, PhD  
 Jacek Kasznicki, MD, PhD  
 Jarosław Kierkus, MD, PhD  
 Marek Kiliszek, MD, PhD  
 Ewa Konduracka, MD, PhD  
 Grzegorz Kopeć, MD, PhD  
 Maria Korzeniewska-Kosela, MD, PhD  
 Dariusz A. Kosior, MD, PhD  
 Irina Kowalska, MD, PhD  
 Krzysztof Kowal, MD, PhD  
 Justyna D. Kowalska, MD, PhD  
 Dariusz Kozłowski, MD, PhD  
 Brygida Knysz, MD, PhD  
 Łukasz Krzych, MD, PhD  
 Piotr Kułakowski, MD, PhD  
 Maciej Kupczyk, MD, PhD  
 Marek Kuch, MD, PhD  
 Eugeniusz J. Kucharz, MD, PhD  
 Jan Kulpa, MD, PhD  
 Jarosław Kuźdzał, MD, PhD  
 Yau-Jiunn Lee, MD, PhD  
 Jacek Lelakowski, MD, PhD  
 Małgorzata Lelonek, MD, PhD  
 Radosław Lenarczyk, MD, PhD  
 Ewa Lewicka, MD, PhD  
 Piotr Lipiec, MD, PhD  
 Mieczysław Litwin, MD, PhD  
 Maciej Machaczka, MD, PhD  
 Ireneusz Majsterek, MD, PhD  
 Jolanta Małyszko, MD, PhD  
 Barbara Małecka, MD, PhD  
 Sylwia Małgorzewicz, MD, PhD  
 Maciej Matłok, MD, PhD  
 Filip Mejza, MD, PhD  
 Agata Mulak, MD, PhD  
 Jacek Musiał, MD, PhD  
 Marek Naruszewicz, PhD  
 Antonello Nicolini, MD  
 Marek Niedoszytko, MD, PhD  
 Marita Nittner-Marszalska, MD, PhD  
 Ewa Nowalany-Kozielska, PhD  
 Piotr Odrowąż-Pieniążek, MD, PhD  
 Bogusław Okopień, MD, PhD  
 Agnieszka Olszanecka, MD, PhD  
 Grzegorz Opolski, MD, PhD  
 Danuta Owczarek, MD, PhD  
 Radosław Parma, MD, PhD  
 Tomasz Pasierski, MD, PhD  
 Krzysztof Pawlaczyk, MD, PhD  
 Andrzej Pawlik, MD, PhD  
 Vittorio Pengo, MD, PhD  
 Joanna Pera, MD, PhD  
 Tadeusz Piśa, MD, PhD  
 Maria Podolak-Dawidziak, MD, PhD  
 Daniel P. Potaczek, MD, PhD  
 Aleksander Prejbisz, MD, PhD  
 Piotr Przybyłowski, MD, PhD  
 Grzegorz Przybylski, MD, PhD  
 Elizer Rachmilewitz, MD, PhD  
 Piotr Radwan, MD, PhD  
 Elżbieta Radzikowska, MD, PhD  
 Tomasz Rakowski, MD, PhD  
 Witold Rużyło, MD, PhD  
 Grażyna Rydzewska, MD, PhD  
 Tomasz M. Rywik, MD, PhD  
 Marek Sanak, MD, PhD  
 Fabian Sanchis-Gomar, MD, PhD  
 Krzysztof Śladek, MD, PhD  
 Marek Słomczyński, MD, PhD  
 Bogdan Solnica, MD, PhD  
 Hui Song, PhD  
 Tomasz Stompór, MD, PhD  
 Krzysztof Strojek, MD, PhD  
 Katarzyna Stolarz-Skrzypek, MD, PhD  
 Paweł Stróżecki, MD, PhD  
 Jan Styczyński, MD, PhD  
 Joanna Sułowicz, MD, PhD  
 Anhelli Syrenicz, MD, PhD  
 Antoni Szczepanik, MD, PhD  
 Krystyna Sztefko, MD, PhD  
 Justyna Szumiło, MD, PhD  
 Renata Taboła, MD, PhD  
 Michał Tendera, MD, PhD  
 Małgorzata Tokarska-Rodak, PhD  
 Jacek Treliński, MD, PhD  
 Maria Trusz-Gluza, MD, PhD  
 Piotr Trzonkowski, MD, PhD  
 Anetta Undas, MD, PhD  
 Ewa Wender-Ożegowska, MD, PhD  
 Dorota Wielowieyska-Szybińska, MD, PhD  
 Alicja Wiercińska-Drapała, MD, PhD

Karina Wierzbowska-Drabik, MD, PhD  
Andrzej Więcek, MD, PhD  
Małgorzata Wiśłowska, MD, PhD  
Ewa Wypasek, PhD  
Jarosław Zalewski, MD, PhD  
Krystyna M. Zawilska, MD, PhD  
Zbigniew Zdrojewski, MD, PhD  
Tomasz Zieliński, MD, PhD  
Dorota Zozulińska-Ziółkiewicz, MD, PhD  
Małgorzata Zwolińska-Wcisło, MD, PhD  
Dorota Zyśko, MD, PhD

\*As we were unable to verify the credentials of each individual reviewer, please note that MD, PhD was used as an equivalent of the Polish title of dr n. med., dr hab. n. med., or prof. dr hab. n. med.